

Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (LRCP)

Monthly Project Update

December 2018

Location: Napantao Dive Resort, Napantao, San Francisco, Southern Leyte

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LRCP Project Aim

The Southern Leyte Coral Reef Conservation Project (LRCP) is a collaborative project to protect the coral reefs of Sogod Bay, providing training and conservation education opportunities for local Filipinos, as part of an integrated programme to develop local capacity and ensure the long-term protection and sustainable use of marine resources throughout the region. Coral Cay Conservation (CCC) is working at the invitation of and in partnership with the Provincial Government of Southern Leyte (PGSL). CCC provides the resources to help sustain livelihoods and alleviate poverty through the protection, restoration and management of coral reefs and tropical forests.

CONTENTS:

- Latest news
- Story of the Month
- Survey Update
- Marine Creature of the month

Latest News

Welcome to our new SCUBA Instructor, Scoob!

Matthew, or as we know him 'Scoob', arrived on base just after the New Year, and has already started teaching our new volunteers. He began his Scuba life in 2005 doing remote marine conservation in Mexico. He went on to do more marine conservation and his Divemaster in the Seychelles in 2016. Later the same year he became a PADI Instructor going to work in Bali, Thailand and the Canary Islands. Scoob has also served in the British Military and has been a security and survival expert for projects across the world. Welcome to the team Scoob, we're glad to have you on board!



Scoob in all his gear coming in off a dive. Photo credit: Scoob!

Congrats to our Newest Advanced Divers!

Our new instructor, Scoob, got stuck in straight away and with the help of FBM Gareth and PS Manon, got three new volunteers (Ed, Sian and Steph) certified up to the level of advanced open water in time to start the first skills development program of the year. With courses like fish ID and underwater naturalist included, the advanced open water training really puts the new volunteers in good stead for when the time comes for survey practice. Ed will be with CCC for 16 weeks to complete his dive master training, so watch this space for updates on that. Congratulations guys! Now to start with their skills development program – watch this space.



L-R: Sian, Steph and Ed relax on the sea wall after finishing off their advanced open water training. Photo credit: SO Jordan Williams

Story of the Month

Christmas Break

As well as all of our current staff taking the time they had here on base without volunteers to relax and get some much needed rest, two of them managed to get away and do a bit of travelling around the Philippines – PS Manon made it to Malapsacua and FBM Gareth to Dumaguete! They both had a wonderful time and enjoyed seeing some of what the rest of the Philippines has to offer in terms of diving and beaches.

SO Jordan enjoyed the festivities here in Napantao, whilst making sure Coral and Shrimp (their two dogs) were looked after. The team also spent a lot of the festive period cleaning the field base from top to bottom. Lost things were found (including some fancy dress and a box of disco lights), and backs were sore, but it was all worth it to have the site spick and span and shining in time for the new arrivals at the start of the year.



PS Manon getting her mop on in some of the newly discovered fancy dress.

Survey Monthly Update

Survey background: Since January 2013, survey efforts have been focused on assessing potential and existing Marine Protected Areas in Sogod Bay to provide appropriate management recommendations. To do this CCC uses an expanded version of the Reef Check protocol, which has been customised to perfectly fit our work in Sogod Bay. Prior to this a baseline appraisal of marine resources in Sogod Bay was carried out. In 2018, CCC will be using a revised approach to assess the effectiveness of CCC's previous efforts in establishing Marine Protected Area's (MPAs) with the goal of understanding the barriers associated to their establishment in the Southern Leyte Province. If you would like more information about our surveying please contact our Project Scientist, Manon Broadribb at lrcp@coralcay.org.

Nueva Estrella Norte Surveying Continues

In December we managed to finish off the surveying of Nueva Estrella Norte, the final site in our 'Before After Control Impact' or 'BACI' approach of 2018.

Approved in 2016, Nueva Estrella Norte is a reasonably new MPA, and we can see why it was chosen to be protected. We carried out a rapid visual assessment (RVA) whilst completing our transect surveys,

during which we get a general idea of the survey area by going on a roving dive of the site and taking notes and photos of the different species and substrate types we can see. The live substrate was very diverse, with many different types of hard and soft corals apparent. A few of our target fish and invertebrate species were also spotted during this time, but we cannot say for certain the state of the reef until we finish our biophysical assessments and carry out statistical analysis.

Thank you to our current staff, volunteers and scholars for helping us complete our final surveys of 2018!



A section of the beautiful reef within the MPA at Nueva Estrella Norte. Photo Credit: Jordan Williams (SO).

Scientific reports from all of CCC's sites around the world are available on our website at <http://www.coralcay.org/science-research/scientific-reports>

Marine Creature of the Month

CCC's *Creature of the Month* goes to the butterflyfish! These little guys are found throughout tropical waters. About 120 species have been described to date, most belonging to the genus *Chaetodon*, which are generally oval/round in shape with a relatively thin profile. Nearly 30 of the species can be found on our very own House Reef here at Napantao!

Butterflyfishes have long been a favourite of underwater photographers, displaying a remarkable array of colour patterns. Most exhibit shades of yellow, orange, or white with prominent black or brown spots, stripes, bands, or a combination of these features. All butterflyfishes have sharp spines on the front half of the dorsal fin, which are used as a defensive weapon. In most cases the spines, although prominent, stick to the general body shape of the fish.

Most species live on sections of the reef where there is prolific coral growth. This is not merely a coincidence as the diet of many butterflyfishes consists wholly or at least partially of living coral polyps. Other species eat a combination of small bottom-living invertebrates and algae, but use the coral growth for shelter. Butterflyfishes are generally "home-ranging," meaning they are restricted to either individual reefs or a limited section of more extensive reef complexes. Many species are also often found in mating pairs that may remain together for years, if not life. Cute!



Top: ornate butterflyfish and bottom: ovalspot butterflyfish. Photo credit: Coral Cay Conservation

Learn More!

To learn more about the CCC Philippines project, to join the expedition, or to find out about local marine scholarships, visit www.coralcay.org